

ARTICLE 17-1
ON PAGE 4-1

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Panel Tells Reagan the Russians Seem to Have Broken Arms Pacts

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WASHINGTON, April 20 — An inter-agency committee has reported to President Reagan that it believes the Soviet Union has violated terms of the 1979 strategic arms accord, and the Administration is under pressure from conservative senators to make that finding public, officials disclosed today.

Officials said the President, prompted by the report, had appointed a new panel headed by William P. Clark, the national security adviser. The panel will begin meeting this week to check "all aspects of compliance" with nuclear arms treaties to see whether there has been a pattern of Soviet violations and to consider what action Washington should take.

'A Fairly Long List'

Officials said the new panel would examine "a fairly long list" of potential violations under the 1979 strategic arms agreement, the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the 1976 Treaty on Peaceful Nuclear Exchange. They said the panel could take as long as a month to complete its work.

Already, a political struggle is developing in Congress over how the United States should deal with possible Soviet violations of the second strategic arms limitation agreement. The treaty was signed, and though it was never ratified, both sides have said they will abide by it.

Some conservative senators want to publicize possible Soviet violations to throw Moscow on the defensive in arms talks and as a deliberate counterweight to liberal pressure for a nuclear freeze. Others are urging caution for fear of killing the second arms limitation agreement, disrupting the entire process of arms negotiations and even raising new tensions with allies in Western Europe.

On Monday, two conservative Republican Senators, Orrin G. Hatch of Utah and Steven D. Symms of Idaho, reportedly pressed Defense Secretary Caspar

W. Weinberger to have the Administration publicly charge Moscow with violations. The Senators contended that this would strengthen the Administration's case for the MX missile and spur "a public campaign to increase the defense budget."

Senator James A. McClure, Republican from Idaho, said a conservative faction in the Senate was also considering a resolution calling for an end to American compliance with the strategic arms treaty if conservatives are not eventually satisfied by Administration action on what they believe is a pattern of Soviet violations.

But last Thursday, the leaders of the Senate Intelligence Committee — Barry Goldwater of Arizona, its chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, its ranking Democrat — sought to caution the Administration against rushing into public charges.

"We are confident that you recognize the pitfalls in such a course," the two Senators said in a letter to President Reagan. "Any statement issued by the White House on Soviet noncompliance with Salt II would have to be supported by detailed intelligence information. The release of this information would probably trigger further disclosures, and this could compromise sensitive sources and methods."

On March 31, President Reagan said there were "increasingly serious grounds for questioning" Soviet compliance with arms treaties, but he refrained from charging any outright violation. On April 6, Mr. Weinberger went a bit further, saying, "There may be violations, indeed, and this would not be the first time."

High officials said the Administration, moving cautiously because of the seriousness of the issue, would almost certainly question Moscow more closely before making public charges of a treaty violation.

In an extremely detailed and carefully prepared speech on the Senate floor last week, Senator McClure listed several "militarily significant violations or circumventions" by the Soviet union of past nuclear arms treaties.

In his catalogue of potential arms treaty violations, Senator McClure said these were the "actions of greatest concern" to the United States:

¶Development of two new types of intercontinental ballistics missiles.

¶Testing of a new mobile air defense system, the SAM-12 missile, as part of a nationwide antiballistic missile defense system forbidden by the 1972 antiballistic missile treaty.

¶Concealed deployment of the banned mobile SS-16 missile around the Plesetsk test range.

¶Underground nuclear tests of up to 250 kilotons of explosive power in excess of the 150-kiloton limit imposed by two treaties.

¶"Rapid reload and refire exercises of the SS-18 missile" and stockpiling other extra missiles, thus circumventing limits on missile launchers.

¶Deployment of long-range air-to-surface cruise missiles on TU-95 Bear intercontinental bombers and on Backfire bombers, "which greatly increases their intercontinental attack capability," although Moscow insists the Backfire is a medium-range bomber.

¶"Almost total encryptions of the telemetry" data associated with testing of "all significant missiles."

¶Evidence of "direct attack" on an American intelligence satellite "with blinding laser radiation" in violation of the agreement banning weapons from space.

¶Increased strategic "camouflage, concealment and deception designed to interfere with the U.S. national means of technical verification" of Soviet compliance with arms treaties.

Evidently working with information supplied from the military and intelligence communities, Senator McClure said: "There are reliable reports of over 15 Soviet underground nuclear tests over 150 kilotons — the limit set by the Threshold Test Ban Treaty. Of these violations, there is a 95 percent probability that several are at militarily significant levels at or above 250 kilotons."